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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [PINR](#) [MX](#)
SUBJECT: DNI DENNIS BLAIR'S OCTOBER 19 MEETING WITH JORGE
TELLO PEON AND GUILLERMO VALDES

Classified By: Ambassador Carlos Pascual.
Reason: 1.4 (b),(d).

11. (S/NF) Summary. On October 19, Director of National Intelligence Dennis Blair met with Executive Secretary of the National Public Security System Jorge Tello Peon and head of the national intelligence service (CISEN) Guillermo Valdes as a follow-on to the discussion with President Calderon (ref a). Tello Peon and Valdes agreed on the need to develop joint strike forces to improve Mexico's intelligence to operations capability against high-value counternarcotics targets. They also concurred to participate in joint assessments of GOM efforts in Tijuana and Ciudad Juarez, as well as a bilateral exercise to rehearse for operations against HVTs. Mexico is beginning to learn the lessons the USG has on the need for interoperability and collaboration on both intelligence and operations. End summary.

Joint Strike Force

12. (S/NF) Tello Peon emphasized the Office of the Presidency's commitment to calling upon the Mexican state apparatus to address the security issue. He said that he is impatient to see results, but optimistic that progress will be made. He recognized the need to improve Mexico's intelligence-to-operations capability and indicated that joint task forces would be a way forward. He also indicated that the GOM would welcome USG assistance in setting them up. Valdes said the GOM had considered creating elite joint strike forces in the past, but had never reached a final decision. Now that the GOM has a list of high-value targets, it will have to take the decision again. DNI Blair offered examples of U.S. task forces that have worked well, and said that the key is determining who should be in charge of the units, then letting those selected leaders engage in planning processes.

Decentralization of Operations

13. (S/NF) Tello Peon mentioned that President Calderon is often so committed to high-value target operations that it can centralize the decision-making process too much and be counterproductive. He noted that such centralization is a risk. DNI Blair agreed that centralization can slow the pace of operations and said that delegation of authority in a structured way with clear rules of engagement offers greater speed. He assessed that the most important decisions are

often made at the colonel level (or the police equivalent). Valdes said they are trying to enhance Ciudad Juarez's intelligence unit and are looking to establish a link between Juarez and the El Paso Intelligence Center (EPIC).

Joint Assessment

14. (S/NF) Tello Peon and Valdes agreed to move forward on planning a joint assessment of GOM efforts in Tijuana and Ciudad Juarez (such as the interagency UNITO intelligence unit) to determine what has or has not been successful locally. Ambassador Pascual emphasized the need to build the appropriate bilateral team that will be accepted by Federal Police and military elements in those areas. Tello Peon suggested the high-level Planning Office could determine the composition of teams and said it should be done in at least 3 months time.

Joint High-Value Targeting Exercise

15. (S/NF) DNI Blair asked whether the USG and GOM could hold a bilateral planning exercise to test and rehearse the process of turning actionable intelligence into operations against high-value narcotics targets by a multi-agency reaction force team. Recognizing the utility of an elite operational task force, Tello Peon agreed that such a rehearsal would be useful and supported it as a bilateral project.

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Paradigm Shift

16. (S/NF) Tello Peon emphasized that Mexico is just beginning its transition to a new security system, indicating that the GOM is working hard to "change the whole political wheel." He noted that security and law enforcement institutions are working together better than they have in the past, but continue to need U.S. assistance. At the end of the day, Mexico lacks strong institutions and a culture of citizen participation.
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